



The Value of Arizona Family Literacy



Arizona Department of Education
Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Arizona Family Literacy provides comprehensive, family-centered programs to families who have the lowest incomes, the lowest levels of adult literacy and who have one or more children under age eight.

Family Literacy is an intergenerational effort intended to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by enhancing the educational opportunities of all family members. Family Literacy is authorized under:

- The **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** to ensure that every child reads well by the end of third grade and which supports the Even Start comprehensive family literacy program
- The **Arizona Family Literacy Program A. R. S. 15-191** promotes increased basic and literacy skills of parents and their pre-school children
- The **Workforce Investment Act** which requires states to develop strategic plans outlining ways they intend to improve adult education and family literacy services
- The **Head Start Act** that ensures that children from low income families have access to high quality preschool programs

Family Literacy Programs serve the most educationally and economically challenged families in the state. There are 21 programs that provide 16 – 20 hours of weekly, comprehensive family literacy services at 65 sites across Arizona.

During 2003-2004:

- The average family income was \$12,500 *
- **50%** of these families had incomes under \$10,000 *
- **26%** of these families had incomes under \$5,000 *
- **84%** of the families had Spanish as their primary language

* Families are predominately, two parents, two or more children

Effectiveness of Family Literacy

Family Literacy is unique in that it targets the needs of the most economically disadvantaged families within communities.

Benefits to Children: Early education helps improve the cognitive and academic functioning of children and enables them to enter kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.

Benefits to Adults: Adult and parenting education provide a positive educational experience as parents improve their basic life management and employability skills. A parent's educational attainment is one of the best predictors of their child's academic success.

Benefits to Families: Family Literacy addresses the literacy needs of the whole family and supports parents in their role as their child's first and most influential teachers.

Benefits to Arizona: Families gain or improve their employment status, contribute more taxes and support their schools and community.



Components of Family Literacy

Arizona Family Literacy Programs integrate six service components: **early childhood education, adult basic education, parenting education, parent-child interaction, community service/volunteerism, and home-based instruction.**

Family Literacy is defined within federal statutes as high-quality, literacy-focused services that are **of sufficient intensity in terms of hours and duration to make sustainable changes in a family** and that integrate all of the following activities:

- Interactive literacy between parents and their children
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children
- Parent literacy education that leads to economic self-sufficiency
- Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences
- Experiential school and community service that builds skills, language fluency and community integration
- Transfer of educational concepts and values into the home and the family

Outcomes of Family Literacy 2003 – 2004

- **70%** of adult participants made significant educational gains *
- **95%** of adults with a goal of entering employment, met their goal
- **87%** of adults with a goal of retaining or improving employment, met their goal
- **88%** of adults with a goal of obtaining a GED, did so
- **82%** of adults with a goal of entering post-secondary education or training, did so
- **95%** of the parents increased involvement in their children's education
- **95%** of the parents increased involvement in their children's literacy
- **70%** of the children served **made significant language gains ****
- **82%** of the children served **made significant problem-solving gains****
- **75,568** Community Service hours were performed by families in schools and community based organizations
- **\$389,175 of in-kind service, based upon minimum wage, was generated by the above Community Service hours**

* **Adult Significant** = a minimum of 2.3 yrs growth in their lowest tested subject

** **Child Significant** = a 15 point increase pre-post evaluation

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